



Mayor Pat Menna



Councilman Ed Zipprich
RedBankGreen.com photo



Former Councilman Michael Dupont

THE KNIVES ARE OUT IN RED BANK!

TIME TO CHANGE IDIOTIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT AS DUPONT MOVES ON MENNA

RED BANK — Well that didn't take long!

In the aftermath of the election, we predicted political turmoil in Red Bank, specifically the weakening of Democratic Mayor Pasquale "Pat" Menna.

But this newspaper didn't expect it this quick, with the first knife thrust from an unexpected source — former Democratic Councilman Michael Dupont, who told the insidernj.com political website that he'll seek the party's mayoral nomination next year when Menna would be up for reelection. Dupont served with Menna on the council for years, and he's a protege of former Democratic Mayor Edward J. McKenna, Jr, who is also his law partner.

Et tu, Duponte?

Meanwhile, we expect the now most powerful man in Red Bank — Councilman and Red Bank Democratic Chairman Ed Zipprich — to also move on Menna and grab the party's nomination for mayor himself. Even better, Zipprich and Dupont aren't exactly known for being political allies, so this could be some great three-way action! In the end, Zipprich as party chairman controls the small clique who make the nomination and he'll be the next mayor. A Democrat is now pretty much always assured of winning in Democratic Red Bank for the foreseeable future. They're not electing Republicans there.

With the election of a fourth Democrat to the Borough Council, Zipprich now controls that six-member body, as the other three Demo-

cratic council lemmings listen to him. Having Mr. Z in control of the borough government is a disaster waiting to happen, although it's going to be great for us storywise.

(Menna only votes in case of a council tie, and the rest of his job is basically ceremonial. The borough manager runs the government day-to-day. The power of the mayor's position in Red Bank is basically the platform that comes with the title.)

So what should we all make of this — in a town that's so important to the region?

It's simple. It's time to end one-party rule in Red Bank. It's getting ridiculous. This is a Democratic town and whoever can get the nomination of the Democratic organization — that handful of people controlled by Ed Zipprich — will almost always win in November. The voters have little power in the matter. It's downright undemocratic! And it's especially true next year when Democratic voters are itching to come out and stick it to our esteemed Republican President in the Congressional mid-term elections. They're going straight down the ballot and will be voting for the Zipprich-selected local candidates.

So what to do?

First, let's note that the other two triCities — Asbury Park and Long Branch — are as Democratic as Red Bank, if not more so.

But there's a big difference. Asbury and Long Branch have non-par-

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san local elections, where the candidates for Mayor and Council do not run under party banners. That makes the election much more competitive, unlike in Red Bank where it's become a joke. Under a non-partisan system, you wouldn't need Ed Zipprich's blessing to become an elected official. Menna, Dupont, Zipprich and anyone else could all run for Mayor in one column on the ballot, without party affiliation — and let the best person win. Now that's American!

shove it up the ass of his political opponents — while doing something that would be a real service to the borough.

Menna should put together a bipartisan coalition with respected soon-to-be former GOP Councilwoman Linda Schwabenbaer to advocate for a new form of non-partisan government. Do a petition drive to get it on the ballot next November — when Menna will likely be off the ballot because either Democrat Dupont or Zipprich will depose him. He'd still be mayor until the end of 2018, however.

Here's the hilarious part. If such a bipartisan coalition can get voters to approve this nonpartisan initiative, Menna can take a few months off and run again in May the following year for Mayor in a non-partisan race when the new form of government takes effect, with a bipartisan ticket of Democrats and Republicans. And he can win.

Such competition would be great for Red Bank. Suddenly, someone like moderate Republican Linda Schwabenbaer can return to the Council because she'd be a candidate in a non-partisan May election where people won't care about state or national politics. Nor will they be casting votes for Democrats or Republicans. It will be about which ticket or independent candidates to support. It will be about who's the best candidate, regardless of party. Can someone tell us what's wrong with that?

Meanwhile, the power of the Democratic organization led by Ed Zipprich will be decimated. The Democratic Party will no longer dictate who gets elected in Red Bank by virtue of the nomination. If a Democrat wants to run and tout their Democratic Party credentials, that's fine. But Zipprich won't have a monopoly on who gets to have the word Democrat next to their name on the ballot — because no one will.

That's how it should work. Let's see if Menna's velvet glove can get this going.

We'll certainly do our part. Now that would be a good government campaign we'd love to push.

So here's a way for the always gracious and mannerly Mayor Menna to politely shove it up the ass of his political opponents — while doing something that would be a real service to the borough.

How to change it in Red Bank? The most direct way is to get enough signatures on a petition to have a referendum switching to a different non-partisan form of government. We'd also suggest moving the election to May as part of that referendum, as Long Branch now does, so the focus is solely on the local race and voters don't get distracted by state and national politics.

If voters approve such a change to non-partisan government, then there will be an election under the new system for all the seats.

So here's a way for the always gracious and mannerly Mayor Menna to politely

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